

We Are Blinding

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/21837511) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/21837511>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Charlie Countryman (2013) , Adam (2009) , Hannibal Extended Universe - Fandom
Relationship:	Nigel (Charlie Countryman)/Adam Raki
Characters:	Nigel (Charlie Countryman) , Adam Raki
Additional Tags:	Depression , Depression Recovery , meet cute , First Kiss , First Time , Frottage , Hand Jobs , Fingering , gun range , Flirting , Intimacy , Romance
Language:	English
Series:	Part 3 of Prompt Stories
Stats:	Published: 2019-12-17 Words: 5,298 Chapters: 1/1

We Are Blinding

by [StratsWrote](#), [whiskeyandspite](#)

Summary

Living was hard. Dying had been easier, both times he'd done it. He should have given in the first time, before he heard the cello music. He definitely shouldn't have gotten back up after being shot in the head.

Nigel doesn't die at the end of Charlie Countryman, instead he goes to New York to escape painful memories and give himself a break. Depressed and bored, Nigel's not looking for much, until a beautiful angry boy runs into him with a box of office supplies and changes his life.

Notes

A gorgeous idea from the lovely [Cookie](#)! We had so much fun writing this one, watching them fall in love and grow together. Thank you for the beautiful prompt bby!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

New York was not as beautiful as Bucharest, but one city was otherwise much the same as any other. Same smell of food perpetually drifting out of shops. Same rumble of the trains beneath his feet. Same anatomically correct graffiti on the sides of the grimy buildings.

Nigel had come to America to get *away* from his past, not to recreate it, but even the garbage apartment he was renting looked like the places he'd holed himself up in back home.

Darko had promised him more money, better views, but all of that was tied up in The Business, and since no one but Darko could know Nigel was still alive... Darko was running into some snags.

Nigel hadn't bothered to get a job, not when Darko would inevitably have work for him, but he couldn't stay cooped up all day, either. As soon as his injuries had healed up, Nigel had started wandering the streets of the city, whenever time and memory started to weigh heavily on him.

He could admit to sometimes getting lost in the architecture, but really, it was the kid with the box who bumped into *him*.

"*Damn !*" the kid's voice was almost hysterical in pitch, and as the contents of his box sprayed out over the sidewalk he stamped his foot and smacked his hands against his head. "Damn, damn, damn,"

Nigel was thrown for a moment. Sure, he'd dropped his box, but it wasn't that huge of a fucking deal.

"Alright," he offered, "calm down, fuck, I'll get it."

Office things. A mug, papers, pens, trinkets... Nigel grabbed them up and shoved them back in. He didn't care if he got it right or not, hell, it's not like this stuff was particularly important. When he stood up again, the kid was still hitting his head. Rhythmic, repetitive, unusual. Weird.

"Hey!" Nigel called, stepping a little closer, box pressed to his side. "I got it all, alright? Shit. Watch where you're walking."

The kid looked up at him. Or didn't. His gaze seemed to skip right over Nigel and settle somewhere else entirely. He didn't seem to be crying, but he looked like he wanted to.

Nigel frowned. "Hey, are you alright, kid?"

"I'm not a *child* ," the kid said, "I'm twenty-nine years old."

He didn't look a day over twenty-two, but he'd stopped cursing and attacking himself, so Nigel considered his anger a win.

"Okay. What's your name then?"

“Adam.”

Now they were getting somewhere. “Alright, Adam, I’m Nigel. Want to tell me why you’re freaking out?”

“They took my job from me,” Adam replied, spitting vitriol onto the sidewalk between him and Nigel. “They took my job, and I was good at my job, I was very good at my job. They said I was too good. I was doing too well, and making things better than they wanted and they fired me. Fired. I got *fired* today.”

Nigel’s brows went up incrementally, still holding the box the kid had been carrying as he watched him fume on the sidewalk. No one else seemed to take any notice of him, not when he first yelled at Nigel, not when he was hurting himself, not now, either, when his voice was still bright and loud enough to hear over the cacophony of cabs and train rattles.

“Shit,” he said after a while, articulate as ever. “Yeah, alright, I don’t fucking blame you then, I’d be looking to tear someone a new one too.”

Adam didn’t say anything, but his breathing had eased somewhat after the outburst and his cheeks weren’t quite as bright red anymore. Nigel couldn’t believe the kid was nearly thirty. He reached into his pocket for a pack of cigarettes and held it out to him, shaking it gently when Adam didn’t immediately respond.

“No,” Adam said, though he didn’t look entirely convinced. “Cigarettes are bad for you. They lead to an increased risk of lung cancer, heart disease-”

“We all have to go sometime, darling. I’ve been shot in the head,” here, Nigel pushed back his hair to show off the scar that grazed his temple and took out the top curve of his right ear, “If that didn’t kill me, nothing will.”

“We all have to go sometime,” Adam mimicked, “Your previous survival in no way impacts your future health concerns.”

Nigel shrugged. “Been around a long time. At this point in my life, I do what makes me feel good and just try to get by.”

Adam looked from him to the cigarettes, his face scrunched up in a contemplative expression that looked painfully serious. “Give me those.”

Guilt crept in around Nigel’s edges. He’d ruined his own life, he didn’t need to go around helping others ruin theirs like some sort of reverse guardian angel. “You can have *one*,” he said firmly, handing it over.

Adam, of course, had no idea how to hold it, how to light it, how to breathe in. Nigel walked him through it, grinning when Adam immediately choked on the first inhale, and then gagged.

“That’s *disgusting*. Why would anyone want to do that all the time?”

"It makes you look cool," Nigel replied, deadpan, taking another drag of his own cigarette. Adam looked skeptical but didn't say anything to agree or disagree. They stood for a few minutes, Nigel smoking and Adam awkwardly holding his cigarette, unsure if he should give it back or let it go or try smoke it again. Eventually Nigel made the choice for him by flicking away his finished cigarette and reaching to take Adam's unfinished one.

"Where were you heading?"

"Home."

"And where is home?"

"I don't tell strangers where I live."

Nigel snorted, shrugged. "Don't blame you, darling, lots of questionable types out in New York these days."

Adam eyed him a moment, brows furrowed, the ghost of his blush still in the apple of his cheeks where his anger hadn't quite abated. "Can I have my box back?"

"Figured I should carry it," Nigel replied, teasing. "If you keep walking like you were when you fucking walked into me -"

"You walked into *me* ,"

"- then there's no fucking way this shit will get home in one piece." Nigel finished, taking a deliberate puff of Adam's cigarette as his eyes narrowed, challenging him to disagree.

Adam opened and closed his mouth a few times, and then visibly deflated. Nigel knew what it was like to be losing on all fronts. He felt bad for the kid. Not bad enough to let him wander off on his own, though.

Adam lived in a decent sized apartment, only a few blocks from where they'd met but several subway stops away from Nigel's hovel. It was a tidy two bedroom, everything set neatly into place, everything put away where it should be. Nigel had underwear on the floor of his kitchen and the couch was beginning to bear an imprint of his body.

Adam took the box from Nigel and slammed it down on the dining room table. It was horrifically out of place in an otherwise pristine room, but while Adam looked at it for a long, lingering moment, he could not seem to bring himself to clean it up.

Nigel watched him from the doorway, his hands shoved deep in his pockets. The fire had gone out of the kid, and now he looked like he was slowly collapsing in on himself.

"You can go home now, Nigel. Thank you for carrying my things."

"Not sure I should," Nigel said slowly. "You don't seem like you're gonna be okay on your own."

“You don’t know me,” Adam replied quietly. “How can you know that? I’m an adult, I’ll be fine on my own, I’m always on my own and I’m always fine.”

Yeah, Nigel knew that game very well. Being fine. He’d been fine when Gabi had started to fall out of love with him. He’d been fine when that idiot Charlie had shown up and swept her off her feet. He’d been fine, watching her push him away, watching her choose Charlie, watching her hate, hate, hate Nigel where before she’d simply been scared of him.

And that had been fine, too. When she was scared of him.

Of course it was.

It was fine. Everything was *fine*.

“You just got fired, darling.”

Adam bristled a little but didn’t flare up like he had outside. Instead, he shrugged in a way that looked almost painful. “I’ll get over that.”

“Sometimes the best way to get over something is to get under someone,” Nigel pointed out, aiming for lighthearted, aiming for something better than ‘fine’.

What he got was a serious, considering look. A long, lingering scan from his grungy sneakers all the way up to his overgrown blonde hair.

“Alright,” Adam finally said.

“Pardon?”

Adam shrugged. “My day has gone very poorly. I haven’t had a date in a long time. Things are unlikely to get any worse and sex is good for relieving stress. You have to brush your teeth, though.”

Nigel was caught off-guard, something that didn’t happen very often anymore. He was too cautious for that.

He couldn’t tell Adam he’d been kidding. That would be cruel. And it wasn’t like fucking him would be a hardship. The kid was cute, and before Ga- well. *Before*. Nigel had happily played both sides of the field. “You have a spare toothbrush?”

“Yes.” because of course he did. Nigel followed Adam to his bedroom, through to the ensuite, and watched as he crouched to get something from under the sink before handing it to Nigel. A toothbrush, as promised. And not one of those cheap dimestore ones either. Nigel wasn’t sure what to think about all this so he didn’t. He just brushed his teeth.

When he returned to the bedroom, Adam had already taken his shirt off and was working on his belt, and Nigel felt at once like he’d walked in on something he shouldn’t have, and like he was about to start laughing.

He was about to sleep with a stranger. A stranger who'd bumped into him on the street and spoke too loudly outside and too quietly inside. A stranger who'd lost his job by being too good at it.

This was at once the last, and only thing Nigel needed right then.

"You'll have to tell me what you like," Nigel ventured, working free the first few buttons on his own shirt before shrugging it free.

"I like sex," Adam replied simply, and Nigel did snort then, unable to help himself. But Adam didn't look hurt when he looked over his shoulder at him. "I've had sex before, it was nice. If we do what normal people do it will be fine."

"Normal people," Nigel mused, stepping out of his pants next, as Adam did the same. "Now there's a fucking conundrum."

When they were both bare, Nigel had to laugh again. His trysts had rarely been this straightforward. Sure, they were always consensual but he rarely had to talk about sex before having it; they either immediately fell into bed and talked after, or they were gone by the time Nigel had anything to say. He shrugged, almost helpless.

"Can I kiss you?" He asked. Adam blinked at him.

"Yes."

Nigel had it on good authority that he was good at this, and now he was minty fresh. He cupped Adam's face in both hands, tilting him up to slide their lips together.

Slow, at first, gentle, and then Adam made a soft noise and pushed up onto his toes, his chest against Nigel's.

Nigel had been almost embarrassingly soft before, but his body was finally catching on. He let one arm drop to Adam's waist, holding him close. Adam's lips parted for him, and Nigel started to back him towards the bed.

Nigel had been avoiding sex, avoiding any thoughts of romance or intimacy, but this was different. It didn't send him crashing back into his past, didn't do anything but make him hungry for more.

Adam's knees hit the bed. He backed up onto it while Nigel crawled over him, and then they were kissing again, more frantic this time, Nigel's hands grasping to pull Adam's thighs up around his hips.

There was a ferocity in Adam here that Nigel had seen on the street, but not in anger. He was pushing energy around his body to give it somewhere to go and Nigel was more than happy to oblige. He tugged Adam's hair lightly, enough to gauge a response, and a little harder when the sound Adam made was far from displeased.

Nigel kissed his throat, down over his chest and took a nipple between his lips as his fingers fondled the other. Beneath him, Adam squirmed, breathless, and dropped his hands to tug

Nigel's hair. No, not tug it, knead it, like a happy cat without the claws. Nigel hummed, and repositioned himself just enough to be able to give Adam a thigh to rut against as he continued tasting his skin.

Adam's fingers migrated lower, down to Nigel's shoulders, over some of the scars there, down his side where they stopped at his largest. The thing that had been a gaping wound, the thing Gabi's playing had saved him from.

No.

Not her. Not here. Adam, now. This was about Adam.

Nigel bit down gently before pulling back, arching his neck to kiss Adam again and finding that the young man looked absolutely lovely when he flushed in pleasure, rather than anger. He looked so damn *young* and so goddamn *innocent*. But the way he dropped his hand between them both and took both Nigel and himself in his palm to stroke was anything but.

Nigel moved against him in slow, exaggerated rolls of his hips. A mirror of what he wanted to do to Adam, if only he'd known ahead of time he was getting laid today and brought a condom.

Adam was in constant motion, touching Nigel everywhere he could reach, stroking them together until Nigel felt like he was going to die. In the end, Adam came first, writhing beneath him, but Nigel wasn't far behind. He hid a gasp in Adam's throat, making a mess of them both.

Adam breathed out a sigh beneath him, staring up at the ceiling. "Okay," he said finally. "That was nice. I'd like to take a shower now."

Nigel hid a laugh against Adam's shoulder as he squirmed underneath him. "You're the most straightforward person I've ever met."

Adam frowned. "I don't like it when people don't say what they mean. It makes communication difficult."

"You're certainly right there, love," Nigel replied, letting Adam up and pushing himself up on all fours to stretch his back. It had been nice. A quick fumbled fondling in a nice bed, in a nice apartment, in a nice part of town, with a nice boy.

That didn't often happen to Nigel.

He listened as Adam started the shower in the ensuite, seemingly unperturbed by the fact that he had a naked stranger in his bed who could do a lot more than just steal shit from his house. With a sigh, Nigel let himself fall onto his back on the bed and rubbed his eyes. He didn't want to rob Adam. He didn't want to hurt him. Hell, Adam had been the first person to touch him gently and with reciprocal passion in what felt like years.

He wanted to see Adam again, if anything.

He listened to the shower and eventually pushed himself up to get some tissues to clean himself up, dressing quickly when he was done. When Adam came out of the shower a few minutes later, one towel draped over his hips, the other rubbing vigorously through his hair, Nigel just smiled at him.

“Do you want to do that again?”

“Today?”

Nigel snorted. “Not today, darling. But another time.”

Adam considered him the same way he had considered Nigel on the street before shrugging. “I have time, now, I don’t have a job anymore.” He answered after a while, but his tone was lighter than it had been, the look he gave Nigel wasn’t put upon or suggesting he’d rather be anywhere else. “I don’t like phones, though. You’ll have to email me.”

Nigel just smiled. “Then I’ll email.”

Adam didn’t drink coffee. Adam also didn’t eat eggs on toast or without toast, he just didn’t like them. Adam also didn’t like crowds, or loud noises, or anything that made up - in Nigel’s mind - New York City in its entirety. So more often than not, they met in Central Park.

Adam liked space.

Well, that was an understatement.

Adam fucking *loved* space.

He’d go on and on about it until Nigel was dizzy, until his head was crammed with facts and theories he’d never heard of.

But he looked so damn *happy* about it that Nigel never bothered to interrupt him. Sometimes, in the midst of an explanation, Adam would turn to Nigel with a bright grin, gesturing towards his telescope.

“Here,” he would say, “Let me show you.”

They slept together again two weeks after the first time. It was, in Nigel’s opinion, an accident. They were supposed to be at the park, but an unexpected cloud coverage had rolled in right around sunset. Adam was disappointed. Nigel was bored. Kissing had seemed like the most logical option.

Kissing turned to heavy petting, turned to playful bites and wrestling, and the next thing Nigel knew they were half dressed and pawing at each other on Adam’s far-too-fancy couch and aching in their pants.

“Hang on,” Adam mumbled, wriggling free of Nigel’s grabbing hands and tugging his pants back up with one hand as he disappeared for a moment. Nigel just groaned, head dropped back and eyes to the ceiling. He heard Adam before he saw him again, and before he could say anything Adam shoved two little plastic wrappers into his hand.

“I got condoms.” he explained, unnecessarily.

Nigel just grabbed him and tugged him closer to kiss. Feeling Adam almost vibrate in excitement against him. They’d not talked explicitly about sex at all since the first time they fell into bed together, but Nigel had gathered enough from just spending time with Adam to guess at what he liked.

He liked when Nigel pulled his hair.

He liked when Nigel sucked bruises to his skin, ones he could hide beneath his clothes and look at in the bathroom at home again.

He liked Nigel whispering dirty things to him as he let Adam rock against him.

He liked, Nigel now found out, to be fingered open.

The sounds Adam made were obscene and Nigel couldn’t get over them. He made Adam come with just two fingers in his ass, curling gently over his prostate until Adam lost control and shuddered through his release, laughing helplessly when he looked up at Nigel again.

Nigel couldn’t remember the last time he’d seen anyone so beautiful.

They fell into routine. It made sense that Nigel would spend the night, if they were going to eat dinner and sleep together anyway. It made sense that Nigel would make breakfast in the morning, even if Adam would refuse half of it.

Doubt crept in around the edges. Nigel was not a good man. Nigel was a bad, terrible man. And Adam was... Adam. Sweet. Brilliant. A bit of a dick when he was being blunt, but Nigel liked that about him.

Darko still sent money, but he didn’t send work. Or conversation. It was as if he was buying Nigel off, providing for him in the hopes that they would never need to speak together again.

Living was hard. Dying had been easier, both times he’d done it. He should have given in the first time, before he heard the cello music. He *definitely* shouldn’t have gotten back up after being shot in the head.

Adam was a bright spot in what was otherwise numb. He kept Nigel distracted. Sometimes distraction was the best thing Nigel could ask for.

“I want to go to a firing range,” Adam said one day, elbow against the back of the couch as he watched Nigel who sat next to him. The other blinked slowly and turned to make sure he’d heard correctly.

“What was that, love?”

“I want to go to a firing range,” Adam repeated, slower. “I want to see what it’s like to fire a gun.”

“You hate my gun,” Nigel said gently.

“I don’t hate your gun. I just don’t like walking with you when you’re carrying it because you don’t have a New York City permit.”

“Because those are a pain in the ass to get.” Particularly when your visa had been purchased in a Romanian strip club.

It was an old argument, one they now had out of habit more than anything else. But Adam was learning how to push Nigel’s buttons. He sighed, stretched, shifted, and somehow ended up half-sprawled across Nigel’s lap. “I want to go to a firing range. I want you to show me how to fire a gun.”

Adorable, manipulative little shit.

They went to a firing range. Nigel stood behind Adam, carefully adjusting the headset over his ears.

“Squeeze, don’t pull. If you pull, you end up aiming at the ceiling and falling on your ass.”

Adam nodded, stood how Nigel put him, held the gun in both hands like Nigel told him. Because only assholes hold a gun in one hand and turn it sideways. Only in the movies could someone actually aim and hit their target that way.

“Fire when ready, baby, try to aim for the middle.”

The gun was one with the softest kick Nigel could find for Adam to start with. The girl at the range had been incredibly knowledgeable about the types of firearms available and which were best for a beginner. She’d talked them through the safety precautions, ran them through checks, gave Adam an encouraging thumbs up before stepping back and giving them their space.

Even so, Adam jerked in surprise after he fired the first shot, turning to look at Nigel over his shoulder with wide, bright eyes.

Nigel gently lifted one of his ear protectors. “How’d that feel?”

“I want to do it again.” Adam told him, voice almost wistful.

It took everything in his power not to jump that boy right then and there, but Nigel resisted.

Sometimes Nigel woke alone. Not because Adam ever left the bed if they shared one, but because Adam never came over to Nigel's, and sometimes he had something to do and needed to be up early.

Sometimes Nigel woke alone and wondered why he was even still alive, why he was bothering, when he was doing nothing but burdening the world with his presence.

He laid in bed and stared at the ceiling. He thought about Bucharest. He thought about his *wife*. Technically, they weren't divorced, but technically, the man who had married Gabi no longer existed.

The phone rang sometime around noon. Nigel didn't want to answer it, but he'd set that ringtone specifically for Adam, and Adam didn't have anybody else, just like Nigel.

"You promised," Adam said when he answered, "You promised you'd be here, where are you?"

And he sounded so distraught, so *devastated*, that Nigel was up and reaching for pants before he'd consciously decided to go.

"He said I have to sell the house," Adam said when Nigel showed up. He was red faced, still shaking with panic. "He said I have to sell the house, I can't sell the house, I've lived here my whole life. This was my father's house!"

Nigel cursed quietly, cursed himself for forgetting, cursed the man for his damn demands, cursed everything. Everything except Adam, whom he approached carefully and welcomed against his chest when Adam pressed to him on his own.

"I can't sell the house," Adam mumbled against him and Nigel embraced him, setting his chin to the top of Adam's head and holding on. He could reach out to Darko, he hadn't in months, now. He could reach out and ask for work, could go back to doing the only thing he'd ever been good at. Scaring people. Hurting people. Killing people.

He'd turn himself inside out if it meant Adam wasn't frustrated and panicking.

"You won't sell the house, baby," he told him. "Is it money? We can get money. I can make some calls and get money. We'll look for a job for you, together, practice for the interviews like we have been, but more often. We'll -"

He didn't know. He didn't know what to do beyond just hold Adam at that moment. Useless, in himself, as always. Though as Adam relaxed more against him, pressed close, nuzzled his chest, perhaps a little less so than this morning. Less so than the day before.

Adam liked to be held. He liked to have his face against Nigel's chest, his throat. He liked it when Nigel put hands in his hair and pet gently. He liked to be kissed when he was crying, soft and so sweet. Nigel treated him like he was breakable, precious. Because he deserved to be treated that way.

He put Adam to bed, curling up behind him. One hand over Adam's belly, holding him close, the other in his hair, tilting his head to plant kisses and promises along his jaw.

Nigel couldn't work in this country and it killed him. He had money, he had means, but he had no way to cut himself off from Romania, no way to amputate that part of his history without the rest of his life crashing and burning around him. And he couldn't have that happen either, he had Adam now.

So they practiced, over and over; when to look at people, when not to, when to smile and when to stay neutral, when to give more information or keep the rest to yourself. More and more. Again and again. And every time Nigel wondered why he was here ruining Adam's life. Why he was here clinging to him and reminding Adam that this had been the man he'd run into the day he lost his job.

He'd wake with a start sometimes, the last thing he'd seen in his dreams the bullet that had almost taken him under. He'd wake and he'd curse and he'd crawl out of bed for a cigarette. But instead of an empty bed, he'd come back to small arms seeking him out, he'd come back to fluffy curls tickling his chin as Adam cuddled up against him and mumbled something about dreams being figments and nothing more.

The more they practiced, the fewer nights Nigel found himself alone.

With Adam he slept better than he had in years. Maybe there was something to that, after all.

Adam got a job uptown, with an engineering firm that could actually appreciate things like 'I built an interactive AI entirely on my own.' Nigel nearly knocked him over when he heard, proud beyond belief.

"I don't know how I would have done this on my own," Adam mumbled into Nigel's chest, clinging to the hug with every bit of strength he had.

"Nah, baby, you're way too good for that." Better than Nigel, definitely, but Nigel felt a little bit better just from being around him. Adam made him feel useful, wanted.

"You should move in with me."

Adam also made him feel completely caught off-guard. Frequently.

"What was that?"

“You should move in with me,” Adam repeated, before turning to set his chin to Nigel’s sternum. “Because it’s been over a year, and you’re not sick of me, and I’m not sick of you. I like seeing you, I like when you touch my hair, I like when you swear at nothing.”

“You hate my smoking.”

“I do hate your smoking,” Adam agreed, but he was smiling. “But as long as you don’t do it in the house you can keep smoking if you like.”

Nigel’s laughter came easier now, warmer. Pulled from him by Adam without any effort at all. He found it no longer hurt his face to smile so much, he’d exercised those muscles more and more in Adam’s presence.

“What I’d like is to take you to bed.” Nigel replied.

“Please do that,” Adam grinned. “But only after you tell me if you’re going to move in.”

Nigel set his hands on either side of Adam’s face and kissed him soundly, pulling back to nuzzle their noses together before kissing him again.

It was answer enough.

Despite his gruff and unapproachable exterior, Nigel had always been a romantic at heart. It wasn’t the showy stuff he liked the most, it was the small things. The way Adam fussed a little if Nigel woke up first and breathed a sigh over his face. The way he reached out to touch Nigel’s hair as he passed him sitting on the couch. The way Adam was willing to try new foods if Nigel promised to eat the things he didn’t finish.

And the way Adam sounded beneath him when they were making love.

“Nigel!”

Adam arched up beneath him, his heels digging into the backs of Nigel’s thighs. Nigel had to pin him down when he got like this, one broad palm covering both his wrists, keeping him still for Nigel to thrust into.

Adam always wanted to be touched, to be kissed and held and *fucked*. He was full of sweet little sounds, and Nigel had cataloged them all.

The gasps when Nigel first slid into him, breathless, frozen, his lips parted just enough for Nigel to lick into. A moan when Nigel tilted his hips up to change the angle. The high, reedy cry of Nigel’s name when he could no longer contain himself, rocking hard and eager against Nigel’s body, crying out until Nigel held him bodily against the bed.

“Hold out for me, gorgeous,” Nigel murmured against his throat, “Give me a little more time to show you how much I love you.” It had been ages already, surely over an hour, but Adam tilted his head back to expose his throat and let Nigel move as he wanted.

Nigel couldn't remember the last time he'd woken up happy, before he started waking up to Adam. He couldn't remember the last time he felt, within himself, contented; like who he was was enough for someone, like he didn't need to change himself, to 'better' himself, to be worthy of someone's affections.

Now, he had someone to come home to, someone who came home to him and immediately embraced him, immediately wanted to be in his space. Someone who he could argue with, get loud with, shout with, and then reconcile with, tender as anything, with a whispered apology and compromise.

Now, as he kissed the sweat from Adam's sternum and whispered to him how good he felt, how Nigel wanted him to come so he could feel his baby's pleasure, *now*, Nigel felt alive for the first time in years.

Adam had a dozen sounds for Nigel, but he was quiet when he came. His toes would curl and his back would arch, his eyes shut and his mouth open on a near-silent gasp of pleasure.

Nigel saw that face in his dreams. Adam's pulse raced against his lips as Nigel sucked a mark under his jaw. Nigel came with his own helpless gasp, pressing Adam down into the sheets and covering him entirely, safely intertwined together.

There was peace here, meaning. They slept and ate and fought together, and Nigel relished every second of it.

End Notes

Title from the song Illuminated by Hurt

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!